

These women and many others are legends today. Therefore, it is essential that all Americans acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of women throughout our Nation's history. In addition, as America's arms stretch out across the seas, we must honor women in the international community that have challenged, changed and improved the condition of women and others in their native countries. That is why on March 8, 2008, America celebrated International Women's Day.

I urge my colleagues and all Americans to commemorate women for their contributions to the advancement of our great Nation.

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. BERMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to call to the attention of my colleagues the 50th anniversary of the European Parliament—the legislative body of the European Union. It is a great pleasure to celebrate this very special day in the history of the European Union. Seldom in so short a period as 50 years do we have the opportunity to witness the birth and evolution of such an important democratic institution.

In the 25 years that I have served as a Member of the United States Congress, the European Parliament has undergone a dramatic transformation. It began as an institution whose members were appointed by national parliaments, and it played a minor role in the policy-making process. Today, the European Parliament is a truly democratic legislature whose members are elected by the popular vote of the people in all member states of the European Union. Furthermore, it has a key role in approving the members of the European Commission and in adopting the EU budget. As the United States Congress, the European Parliament also has significant responsibility for conducting oversight of EU executive governmental institutions.

Madam Speaker, the first half of the 20th century was marked by two bloody World Wars that devastated the European continent and produced deep divisions between European countries. World War I produced sharp national differences among the Europeans, which continued to fester even after that war was concluded. At the end of World War II, Europe was divided by the "Iron Curtain," which ideologically, and politically separated the continent's peoples. During the era of the Cold War, the unification of the Western and Eastern Germany seemed like an impossible dream let alone the unification of Western and Eastern Europe. However, the last half-century has seen the remarkable growth of an ever closer union of people and states.

Indeed, the success of the European Union has produced significant changes in the make up of Europe. The European Union began as an institution for economic cooperation among six Western European nations in 1951, but it has evolved into a political and economic union that now embraces 27 European nations, including 10 former communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. The European

Union has brought peace, stability and prosperity to almost 500 million people.

In 1951, Madam Speaker, the Treaty of Paris, which created the European Coal and Steel Community provided a minor rule for a Parliamentary Assembly. This body evolved and was institutionalized as the European Parliamentary Assembly in the Treaty of Rome that was signed seven years later. The Assembly held its first meeting on March 19, 1951, under the leadership of its first president and one of Europe's great visionaries, Robert Schuman. At that time the parliament was only a consultative body composed of 142 members appointed by the national parliaments of the member states. The members conducted their business in four official languages.

In 1962, the body became the European Parliament, and in 1979, its members were chosen for the first time through direct elections. Over time, treaty revisions have expanded the powers of the European Parliament over legislation, the budget and executive oversight. The European Parliament now has 785 members who work in 23 official languages, and it represents the 492 million citizens of the 27 member states of the European Union.

Madam Speaker, I am delighted that the United States House of Representatives has a cooperative working relationship with the European Parliament. For the last three decades, delegations of our respective legislatures have met twice a year to discuss our common goals and have endeavored to bring the United States and the European Union ever closer together. Currently this exchange—the Trans-Atlantic Legislators Dialog, TLD—is led on the United States side by Chairwoman SHELLY BERKLEY of Nevada and Vice Chairmen CLIFF STEARNS of Florida and JIM COSTA of California. The European Parliament delegation is ably led by Jonathan Evans, a member of the European Parliament from the United Kingdom.

Over the last half-century, Madam Speaker, the United States has worked with our European allies to promote democracy, the rule of law, free market economies and human rights around the world. The 50th anniversary of the European Parliament provides an excellent occasion for all of us to reflect upon our friendship with our colleagues in the European Parliament and to celebrate with them this successful trans-Atlantic cooperation. The ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon and the parliamentary elections in June 2009 should further reinforce the European Parliament's critical role in the European Union decision-making process. I congratulate the European Parliament on its first half-century and look forward to continued collaboration in the future.

RECOGNIZING THE HONORABLE LAURA HILL UPON BEING NAMED CITIZEN OF THE YEAR BY THE SOUTHLAKE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

HON. KENNY MARCHANT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. MARCHANT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Honorable Laura Hill, a Southlake City Councilwoman, commu-

nity and civic leader, as recipient of the Citizen of the Year Award presented by the Southlake Chamber of Commerce.

Laura Hill has been a tireless public servant with a strong sense of stewardship to the entire Southlake community. Ms. Hill's public service truly speaks for itself. She is not only a City Councilwoman, but the Founder and President of SPARKS (Students and Parents Against Risks to Kids in Southlake), Co-founder and Vice President of the Southlake Angel Society, a member of the Southlake Historical Society, and a graduate of Southlake's DPS Citizens Academy and Southlake's fire rehab team. Somehow, she finds additional time for involvement in numerous other community organizations, as well.

Of the many examples of Ms. Hill's selfless service, one story in particular stands out. Not long ago, a Southlake firefighter had a baby with significant medical problems. Due to the high medical costs, the firefighter's family was struggling to keep up. Upon hearing about the situation Laura immediately volunteered and created a fund raiser with her friends. The event raised approximately \$16,000 entirely for the family of the Southlake firefighter.

Whether it is creating fund raisers for those in need, preserving the city's history, solving zoning problems, caring for the children in the community, or volunteering for the city's emergency response team, Ms. Hill is always willing to go above and beyond to serve her community.

I proudly commend the Honorable Laura Hill for her tireless passion and commitment to the betterment of Southlake, Texas. Many community members are grateful for her service and I congratulate her for receiving this prestigious award.

TAMARA CASH

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Tamara Cash of Kansas City, Missouri. Tamara is a very special young woman who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Girl Scouts of America, and earning the most prestigious award of Girl Scout Gold Award.

Tamara has been very active with her troop, participating in many scout activities. In order to receive the prestigious Gold Award, Tamara has completed all seven requirements that promote community service, personal and spiritual growth, positive values and leadership skills.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Tamara Cash for her accomplishments with the Girl Scouts of America and for her efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Girl Scouts Gold Award.

HONORING SHEILA JOSEPH

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Sheila Joseph, a native New

Yorker, daughter of Haitian immigrant parents and raised in public housing, Ms. Joseph conducted her undergraduate studies at the University of California at Berkeley where she double majored in psychology and legal studies, with a minor in education, earning her Bachelor of Arts degree in just three years. After graduating from Berkeley in 1994, Sheila began her legal studies at Georgetown University Law School in Washington, DC. While a student at Georgetown, she worked as a student attorney handling juvenile delinquency cases in the District of Columbia Superior Court.

Upon completing her legal studies in 1997, Ms. Joseph returned to her native New York and spent the next four years working as an attorney for indigent clients, first as a staff attorney with the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, then as a law guardian with The Children's Law Center of New York. Based on her experiences as a law student and lawyer, she became increasingly frustrated by the limitations of the law as an instrument for empowering young people and communities. She determined that the best long term course was to be an educator and have a positive impact on children and impoverished communities.

In 2001, Sheila Joseph applied for, and was accepted into, the New York City Teaching Fellows Program and taught math and science at P.S. 40 in Queens while earning a Master of Science degree in Elementary and Early Childhood Education from Queens College. In September 2004, Ms. Joseph began a one-year residency with Building Excellent Schools, a prestigious and rigorous Boston-based program that trains and supports aspiring charter school founders. She founded the East New York Preparatory Charter School in August 2005.

East New York Prep, ENYP, opened its doors to 100 kindergarten and first grade students in September 2006 to ensure that boys and girls growing up in East New York would have the same opportunity for a good life as children in wealthier communities. ENYP's mission is to address the specific needs and challenges of children in East New York to ensure that students achieve or exceed grade-level mastery of academic content, knowledge and skills.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to recognize Sheila Joseph and her impressive accomplishments in academia. Her passion and concern for inner-city children's educational needs is noteworthy indeed.

ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL ETHICS—CONTINUED

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 11, 2008

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House passed H. Res. 895, a resolution establishing an independent Office of Congressional Ethics within the House of Representatives. I believe it is a long overdue, although partial, step to protect the public trust and bring greater transparency and accountability to the people's House.

At the beginning of the 110th Congress, the Speaker said we must drain the swamp. We

made some changes to the House Rules and passed legislation that mandated more extensive limits on gifts and travel, greater disclosure of activities by lobbyists, helped slow the revolving door of Members of Congress and staff to lobbying on behalf of private interests and brought greater transparency to the earmark process. Yesterday, following painstaking drafts, we took further steps.

The scandals that have embroiled this institution over the last few years because of the unethical conduct of certain Members of Congress have eroded the faith that Americans have in our legislative branch of government. What has only deepened this cynicism is the belief that Congress does a very poor job in investigating the ethical lapses of its own Members. The contentious nature of the current ethics process has too often led to deadlock and an inability to truly investigate claims concerning Members of both parties. While I commend the leadership and the membership of the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct for the work they have done under trying circumstances, it is clear that the process has been missing an independent voice that can help us get above the partisanship and rancor that too often accompany these types of investigations. This bill is a step toward creating that independent voice.

The legislation establishes an Independent Office of Congressional Ethics, composed of six members jointly appointed by the Speaker and the Minority Leader. Three of the members of the office will be nominated by the Speaker with the concurrence of the Minority Leader; three members would be nominated by the Minority Leader with the concurrence of the Speaker. The members, who cannot be current Members of the House, Federal employees or lobbyists, would serve four-year terms with one reappointment possible. The Office would have the ability to initiate review by written notice provided by two Office members, one of which must be appointed by the Speaker, the other by the Minority Leader. The Office would have the ability to refer a matter if three members affirmatively vote to move it to the Ethics Committee.

The legislation has the support of a number of groups that have called for strong reform of the ethics process, including Common Cause, U.S. PIRG and recognized public policy experts such as Norman Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute and Thomas Mann at the Brookings Institute. They recognize that in the past, the principle of Congress policing itself has just not worked. They have played a vital role in making sure that today's resolution comes to a vote so that all of us live up to the oath of office we take the first day of every new Congress. I also want to commend the Speaker who has promised and delivered on her pledge to bring vigorous, ethical leadership to this institution. Without taking action, we will only allow public cynicism about government to continue to grow. This important resolution will bring real ethics reform to Congress. It will help reestablish the trust and confidence of the American people in this institution and in the principle of honest and open government.

PAUL WELLSTONE MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION EQUITY ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2008

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concerns with a provision contained in H.R. 1424, the "Paul Wellstone Mental Health Addiction and Equity Act of 2007." I find it ironic that the House passed a bill intending to provide access to treatment for those with mental illnesses, but did so at the expense of the pharmaceutical researchers who we look to treat many of these conditions.

This legislation provides for more than a 30-percent increase in Medicaid prescription drug rebates. This will do significant damage to domestic manufacturers. You read the headlines—one pharmaceutical company after another is laying off thousands of employees. This industry, like so many others in manufacturing, is facing significant challenges. We want these companies to continue to invest in America and create the research jobs, which find tomorrow's cures. We want to continue to be known as the innovators of the world, and we should not outsource this intellectual capital. Therefore, I urge that the bill's sponsors strike this provision from the bill at conference committee and look to find solutions that do not jeopardize American jobs.

HONORING 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF HARRISVILLE LIONS CLUB

HON. PHIL ENGLISH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, today I rise to congratulate the members of the Harrisville Lions Club as they celebrate their 60th Anniversary this year.

For over half a century, the Harrisville Lions Club has been dedicated to helping the less fortunate. As a Lions Club, the organization is part of the world's largest service organization with over 1.3 million members worldwide.

They have provided aid for those in need, whether it is helping local residents obtain eyeglasses or assisting families after disasters. The Club has been involved in several children's programs, including supporting a camp for local blind children and sponsoring a drug poster program aimed to raise awareness among elementary students of the problems associated with drug use.

I commend Harrisville club president, Lion Connie Rider, for her leadership and dedication to the organization. I'd also like to recognize Lion Leroy Montgomery, who at the age of 99, remains a very active member of the Harrisville Lions Club. I applaud Mr. Montgomery for his lifetime of dedication to helping the less fortunate in his community. His efforts have certainly not gone unnoticed.

I hope my colleagues will join me at this time in recognizing the accomplishments of these individuals as well as all of the other members of the Harrisville Lions Club. Congratulations on 60 years of service.